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ABSTRACT

The booklet traces various components of the special education system in the Netherlands. Initial sections cover special education structure and training of teachers for special education. Individual sections briefly address schools for the deaf, partially hearing, speech disordered, blind, partially sighted, physically handicapped, convalescent, delicate, epileptic, educationally subnormal, seriously maladjusted, learning and behavior disordered, multiply handicapped, and migrant. The types of services provided by special education are mentioned, the system of financing special education is outlined, and views on the future of special education are presented. Also dealt with are referral and admission procedures, transitional stages between special schools and ordinary schools, parent responsibility, and experiments in education. A list of addresses concludes the booklet. (SBH)

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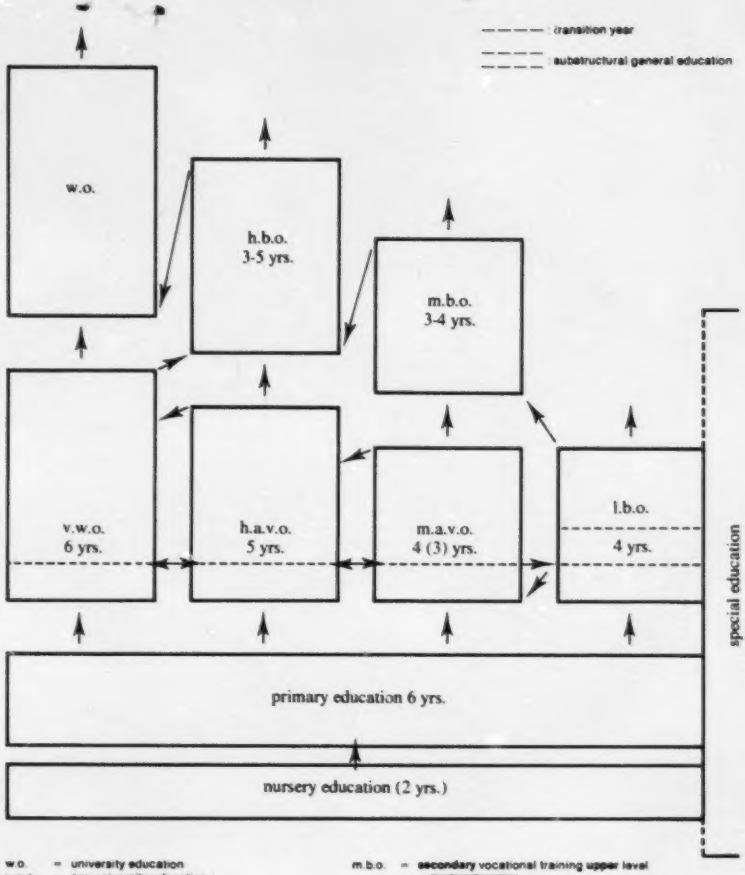

w.o. = university education
v.w.o. = pre-university education
h.b.o. = **higher** vocational education

- technical education
- domestic science education
- agricultural and horticultural education
- commercial education
- socio-pedagogic education
- art education
- secondary teacher training

h.a.v.o. = general secondary education, higher level
m.a.v.o. = general secondary education, intermediate level

m.b.o. = **secondary** vocational training **upper** level

- trade education
- technical education
- domestic science education
- socio-pedagogic education
- commercial education
- agricultural and horticultural education
- art education
- nursery teacher training

l.b.o. = **secondary** vocational education **lower** level

- technical education
- domestic science education
- trade education
- agricultural and horticultural education
- commercial education

1. The place of special education in the Netherlands

The structure of the education system in the Netherlands is roughly as follows:

- nursery education for children from about 4 to 6;
- primary education for children from about 6 to 12;
- many forms of secondary education for pupils from 12 years upwards
- higher education comprising higher vocational education and university education.

There are both publicly-run and privately-run educational establishments in the Netherlands, from nursery school to university level: publicly-run schools are those which are managed by the State or the municipal authorities and privately-run ones are those which have been established by groups of people of similar convictions, and are often denominational. The latter are managed by private organisations with legal status.

In principle, publicly-run and privately-run schools receive equal treatment; both are fully financed by the State and the privately-run ones are expected to meet the same standards as those set for publicly-run schools. Certificates from the two types of establishment are of equal value. At the moment 70% of all primary school pupils attend privately-run schools, and in secondary education the figure is 60%. There are also special schools in the Netherlands. Children whose problems are such that they cannot attend ordinary schools can be admitted there. The problems may range from sensory, physical or mental handicap to social and family problems. Special schools are separate from the ordinary schools in the Netherlands and there are many different types. Extremely good results are achieved in these schools thanks to the individual approach and the enormous efforts of the teachers. Handicapped children often have a far better chance of developing their potential here than in ordinary schools because attention is paid to emotional problems as well as learning difficulties, often with the help of medical or para-medical specialists. The current division into types of school has been

inherited from the past and is based mainly on medical grounds. At one time people became interested in providing help to certain categories of children, help which was regarded as mainly medical. More and more categories of school were thus added to the range and today there are 17 types of special school. Admissions are mostly arranged by each school individually, not regionally since under the present regulations every school has its own admissions board. A disadvantage of this system is that the various schools' admission criteria are not always properly coordinated, and the same can be said of referral and admissions criteria. Normally special schools provide primary education, taking children from 6 to 14, but some of them also have nursery and secondary departments, though these are few. The minimum admission age for the majority of nursery departments is three, and for the primary departments the same age of admission applies as to ordinary primary schools. Pupils normally have to leave special schools at 17, except for those who receive a dispensation to stay longer. A relatively large number of pupils go on to ordinary schools after completing their primary education in special schools.

In the present situation there are children attending special schools whose problems do not justify remedial treatment in separate schools. Since ordinary schools are not yet in a position to help them, special schools are a good arrangement for them, but for the teachers it is an extra load because they have to cope both with children with relatively serious problems and children who arguably should not be in special schools at all.

Training teachers for special education

The majority of teachers in special schools have been trained in colleges of education with normally prepare students to teach in ordinary primary schools. A supplementary course for special school teachers, which is financed full by the state, is provided by two education institutes: the Seminary for Remedial Teaching in Zeist and the Catholic College for Special Education in Tilburg. These two institutes have been training teachers for the Special Teaching Certificate since 1929. The course is part-time and takes two years altogether, but it is not compulsory. There are many teachers in special schools who have had no supplementary training, but who have acquired a certain degree of expertise in practice. Teachers in special schools receive higher salaries than teachers in ordinary schools.

The table below shows the number of special schools in the Netherlands and the numbers of pupils and teachers in these schools on 16 June 1977.

schools for	number of schools	no. of pupils	no. of teachers
1. children with sensory handicaps			
a. deaf children	13	1433	202
b. partially-hearing children	26	3040	306
c. children with serious speech defects	1	211	21
d. blind children	7	571	70
e. partially-sighted children	6	579	64
Total	53	5834	663
2. children with physical handicaps			
a. physically handicapped children	32	3719	406
b. children in convalescent homes (long-term illness)	19	1252	119
c. delicate children	19	1742	122
d. epileptic children	3	294	29
Total	73	7007	676
3. children with mental handicaps			
a. educationally subnormal children	280	34419	2468
b. severely educationally subnormal children	92	6357	568
c. children in institutions for the mentally handicapped	21	1450	136
Total	393	42226	3172
4. Other special schools			
a. for severely maladjusted children	50	3781	378
b. schools attached to residential child-care institutions	3	84	18
c. pedalogical institutes (schools attached to homes where mental disturbance in children is studied and treated)	9	728	72
d. children with learning and behavioural difficulties	238	27096	1916
Total	300	31689	2384

2. Types of special school in the Netherlands

Brief background to the origins of special schools

Education for handicapped children was started in 1790 when a school for the deaf was founded, to which mentally handicapped children were also admitted.

The first school for the blind was set up in 1808. Subsequently, a few denominational schools were set up for the blind and for the deaf. It was not until 1896, nearly a century later, that a start was made on providing full-time education for mentally handicapped children, when two classes for them were annexed to an ordinary primary school.

Finally, with the introduction of compulsory education in 1901, serious thought had to be given to the problem of what to do with children who were mentally unfit for or incapable of attending ordinary schools. It was decided at this juncture to set up separate schools for them.

Towards the end of the thirties people began to realise that other groups of children needed special education, for example children who though not mentally handicapped, had difficulty in learning to read and do arithmetic, children in sanatoria, children in the care of the authorities, neurotic or maladjusted children, or epileptic children.

So schools for tubercular children, for delicate children, for children under the care of the authorities, for children with learning and behavioural difficulties, were added. Children of itinerant parents, for instance bargees' children or the children of caravan dwellers, also came under special education for organisational and administrative purposes.

In 1967 there were 16 types of special school, divided according to categories of pupils. In addition, there were schools for children of caravan dwellers and bargees. In 1977, it became possible to found schools for children with multiple handicaps and to convert special secondary departments in schools for educationally subnormal children into separate establishments.

Schools for the deaf

Deaf children cannot learn to speak by hearing. The approach in the schools is to get deaf children to speak by visual means, i.e. lip-reading. These children therefore have to learn and write at nursery school. Deaf children are tested by a team of experts to see if they have some capacity for hearing which can help them

with lip-reading. The use of costly modern equipment has led to revolutionary changes in the teaching of deaf children. Music and movement also play a major role in their education.

Schools for partially hearing children

The children in these schools can learn to speak in the ordinary way despite their deafness. Language is therefore presented to them through hearing; lip-reading can be used as an aid to hearing.
Partially hearing children start school at a very early age, attending special nursery classes attached to schools for partially hearing children.
They begin to develop their capacity to speak while playing, recognising sounds with the help of modified hearing aids.
Teaching in the primary school also gives priority to language: learning new concepts and using them.

Schools for children with serious speech defects

There are two groups of children in these schools: children with cleft palates and children with other speech defects caused by defective speech organs or serious forms of stammering. These days many of the children with defects of the palate can be operated on; they can then go on to ordinary primary schools or to ordinary secondary schools, if they have reached the appropriate age before treatment in complete. Thanks to the individual help and guidance given to children with other speech defects, they too have the chance of rapidly going on to ordinary schools.

Schools for the blind

Braille is used in schools for the blind to teach children to read.
The children learn how to grasp certain concepts by being confronted with situations where they come into contact with all kinds of different objects. One way to ensure this is organize excursions. They have to learn to conceive of things three-dimensionally.
Blind children have also to be taught how to move about. Learning to use a stick is one of the most essential aspects of their training and a great deal of attention is devoted to it. Intensive psychological guidance and educational help is provided in these schools to aid the childrens' personality development.

Schools for partially sighted children

The ability of partially sighted children to see is trained right from the start in these schools by means of handicrafts where they have to pay attention to detail.
Partially sighted children have had to discover the world at an early age in a rather frightening way and this is often noticeable in their behaviour. Learning to move is therefore an important item on the curriculum.

Schools for physically handicapped children

These schools fall into two categories: those attached to rehabilitation centres and those which are day schools, known as 'mytyl' schools. The term 'mytyl' comes from a fairytale in which a girl called 'mytyl' gives her white dove to a handicapped child. Children attending the former usually do so because they need treatment in a rehabilitation centre, though even at day schools there is a certain amount of time devoted to rehabilitation. Teaching in these schools is geared to the individual level of development of the children, who, as a result of motor defects, may be retarded in their intellectual development as well.

Schools for children in convalescent homes

These schools, which were originally set up for tubercular children, now cater for children who have to stay in sanatoria, hospitals or convalescent homes for a considerable length of time because of any illness.

Schools for delicate children

These children often have psychosomatic complaints. They cannot cope with ordinary school life and run the risk of being left behind for good.

Schools for epileptic children

The main aim of education for these children is to allow them to be integrated as easily as possible into normal everyday life. Handicraft lessons are particularly important in that they provide an effective expression of epileptics' compulsion to move. Motor therapy in gymnastic lessons also encourages purposeful movement.

Schools for educationally subnormal children

Teaching in these schools has to make allowance for the fact that not only is the intellectual capacity of these children impaired, their personality and attitude are likely to be disturbed too. These children can follow part of the normal primary school course at special schools, but only if it is accompanied by remedial teaching.

Schools for severely educationally subnormal children

Severely educationally subnormal children can scarcely be taught at all in the strict sense of the word. The children learn through play and priority is given to teaching children to look after themselves and to developing motor functions, since the majority of the children have no normal control of their muscles because of their mental handicap.

Schools for seriously maladjusted children

Children who cannot stay in ordinary schools because of the way they behave are referred to these schools. An attempt is made to create an atmosphere of trust in which to approach the children and to show understanding when children behave badly in certain situations. At the same time, consistent efforts are made to get the children to behave in a more socially acceptable manner.

Schools attached to child care institutions

The educational level of these children depends on the admissions policy of the institutions to which the schools are attached and can range from educationally subnormal to normal. The institutions have therefore decided that some differentiation is called for. All the children have got into difficulties of one kind or another, often as a result of unhappy home backgrounds (The institutions come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, the schools under the Ministry of Education and Science).

Schools attached to pedalogical institutes

These schools are intended for children with personality disturbances. The children are closely observed under the guidance of a pedalogical institute or university before a decision is made as to the type of special school which is most suitable.

The majority of the children stay two to three years; a main feature of the schools is therefore that the pupils are under close observation while they attend the school and then move on elsewhere.

Schools for children with learning and behavioural difficulties

These schools are for children who have difficulties with certain things such as learning to read, concentrating, or spatial concepts. These problems may be due to congenital defects or to difficulties at home. These children would be unable to keep up at an ordinary primary school.

Schools for children with multiple handicaps

These schools are for children who need extra special care because of more than one defect, whether it be sensory, motor, intellectual or behavioural. It is felt that the effect of the combination of these defects is that neither an ordinary school nor a specific special school would provide these children with optimal chances of development.

Schools for bargees' and caravan dwellers' children

These children are neither mentally nor physically handicapped but they do have a social handicap.
The teaching in these schools is consequently organised along slightly different lines, from those in ordinary schools.

What special education does for children with problems

Help in the broadest sense of the word is provided in the establishment of special schools for handicapped children. As already stated, teachers's salaries in special education are higher than in ordinary education.
Extra teaching staff are needed in special schools, and the expenses that this entails are also refunded. The special duties are as follows:
- Home training for blind children. If children are too young for school, parents are instructed by the school in the remedial approach to their children in preparation for the childrens' school careers. This work is done by nursery school teachers or social workers.
- Home training for deaf children: parents are instructed by social

workers attached to institutes for the deaf in the remedial approach to their children in their pre-school years, to prepare them for their school careers.
Many parents spend one week in every five or six with their children at an institute in the year before they are due to start school, so as to get the children used to the idea.

- articulation classes for partially hearing and deaf children
- extra instruction in ordinary secondary schools for former pupils of institutes for the deaf
- extra language classes for handicapped children of foreign workers
- transition project for physically handicapped children designed to allow them to make a gradual transfer from school to work.

These children are unable to do a normal job because of their handicap but are capable of working in sheltered workshops maintained by the government for the disabled, where they are able to work at an appropriate pace.
Allowing extra staff to be taken on means that these children can regularly visit sheltered workshops during their last year at school.

- Extra teaching for children at schools attached to pedalogical institutes: these institutes carry out research into the treatment of children whose problems are not immediately apparent. The children are often in serious difficulties both at home and at school.

Their developmental disturbance is such that they either already have serious learning or behaviour problems, or are in danger of developing them and there are no appropriate facilities for temporarily helping them in their immediate neighbourhood.

- low vision project for help to practically blind children; entailing educational facilities for the children.
- extra help for children with multiple handicaps.

Outline of the system of financing special education

The cost of special education can be roughly split into four categories:

1. Salaries of class teachers and subject teachers;
2. Salaries of non-teaching staff (aides, technical assistants, speech therapists, physiotherapists etc.);
3. cost of establishing and equipping the schools;
4. material running costs.

The number of teachers whose salaries are paid in each school depends on the pupil/teacher ratio.
For example, a class teacher in a school for partially sighted children has a maximum of 12 pupils; a class teacher at a school for educationally sub-normal children has a maximum of 16.

Views on the future of special education

The point of departure is that every child has a right to education. However, not all children are equally capable of benefiting from the education provided; an attempt therefore has to be made to provide children with the kind of schooling from which they can benefit. The next question which arises is whether we should continue to distinguish between normal children, who are well able to attend an ordinary primary school, and children with problems, who need extra help and are therefore dependent on special education.
The Dutch educationalist Prof J. J. Dumont believes that a reasoned choice has to be made between 'being a normal child in a special school' and 'being a special child in an ordinary school'. In the Netherlands the ordinary schools and the special schools are too much segregated. Good results have been achieved in special schools in fostering the development of children with problems in ways appropriate to their capacities and these results have achieved recognition abroad. But often the work has to be done under difficult conditions: one has to contend not only with the isolation of children with problems, but of special education itself. The reason for this isolation is to be found in the fact that the handicap itself, in other words the medical diagnosis of children with problems, has always been the basis on which help has been based. In future, more attention will have to be paid to the developmental disturbance which has arisen because of the handicap. For example, a blind child can be taught to read and write with the help of braille and that is partial solution to the handicap. The fact that a child is blind, however, affects his or her overall development and the problem arises of how children are to develop their personalities properly with a handicap of one kind or another. Policy is therefore designed to consolidate the relationship between special education and ordinary education. In the first instance an assessment will have to be made as to whether children who are 'different' can be helped in ordinary schools. It is a fact, though, that in the Netherlands many children come into their own as a result of the help they receive at special

schools. This achievement cannot be dismissed lightly nor thoughtlessly sacrificed to ideas of integration. The idea of integration is that there will be one form of basic education for all young children, adapted to their individual needs. At the moment children are all too often referred to special schools, when it would not seem to be strictly necessary. Couldn't these children stay in ordinary schools with a little extra help? After all, we should bear in mind that these days, the intolerance of society being what it is, children tend to be branded for life, once they have been referred to a special school. Policy on the education of children with problems is now based on the idea that improvements will have to be made in two ways: in the first place there will have to be a closer link between special education and ordinary education and the community and, secondly, provisions will have to be made in ordinary schools to cope with special children.

It remains to be seen whether in the future the two can merge, but one would hope that this course will inevitably foster integration. As has already been stated, at the moment there are insufficient facilities in ordinary schools for helping children with problems. A different approach in ordinary schools would improve conditions for a number of children. Research will have to show which children would be better off going to, or staying in, special schools and which could attend ordinary ones. There will always be children whose handicaps are so severe that they are forced to rely on the special help which ordinary schools will never be able to give.
Although the main premise behind future policy is that all children have the right to education, that does not mean to say they can follow the same education.

People may have their doubts about the desirability of perpetuating the current system with 17 different types of special school. If we venture on a division in the integrated system of the future, it will have to be done according to the different types of problems afflicting children and not according to types of education.
We have in mind the following categories:
1. Children with whom something can be achieved with special help in ordinary schools. The teaching in the ordinary schools will have to be designed to follow children in their development, providing a more individualised approach which pays attention to creative skills and not just intellectual achievement. Ordinary

schools will have to spot the problems of 'abnormal' children at an early stage, and report them. Teachers will have to be trained in the future to make provisional diagnoses. Ordinary schools will have to take measures to cope with children with problems: provisions which will have a beneficial effect on the learning process, special teaching methods, speech therapy and remedial teaching, arrangements to cope with emotional problems in families with the help of social workers, in addition to material provisions for partially hearing, partially sighted and physically handicapped children.

2. The children who can return to ordinary schools after a period in a special school. A number of improvements will have to be introduced in the near future and reforms will have to be carried out in the long term to give children with problems the maximum encouragement. Remedial teaching will have to be the basis of the help given to handicapped children in special schools, the aim being to encourage them to use their capacities to the full.

3. Children who will always be reliant on special schools because of the severity of their handicap. This group will continue to need intensive remedial help such as can only be given in separate schools, but the schools will have to integrate more into the life of the community than they do at the moment.

Policy on children who will always have to attend special schools is designed to enable them to participate in normal everyday life as much as possible. The idea behind this is to break down the intolerance towards the handicapped, which unfortunately does still exist. This is why it is a good idea that normal children are confronted as early as possible with the fact that there are children who are different. Some ordinary schools and special schools in the Netherlands have made arrangements for their pupils to spend time together, either during the week or at weekends. Parents, too, are involved in these experiments. It is impossible to draw a rigid line between the three categories, even if it were desirable to do so.

Referral and admission

How should we assess whether children with problems can attend ordinary schools, if necessary with extra help, or whether they should be referred to special schools? The later children go to special schools, the more difficult it is to help them. Late referral is an extra burden for the teachers in special schools. Admissions are usually arranged by each school and not regionally, and the criteria are often uncoordinated for the different types of school. Nor are referral criteria coordinated with admission criteria, which means that children can be pushed from one admissions board to the next, entailing unnecessary stress for children and parents and unnecessary work for teachers. Although there will have to be some form of admissions examination in the future, referral and admissions procedures will have to be improved. The examination is needed to guarantee that an accurate assessment is made of the type of school most suitable for the child concerned, before the decision is taken on whether he should be referred to a special school or not.

Certain principles should be adhered to in improving referral and admissions procedure.

a. Ordinary schools and special schools carry joint responsibility for the referral of children to special schools who have been attending ordinary schools fore some time.
b. There should be close coordination between admission and guidance so that treatment fits the diagnosis.
c. Admissions should be on a regional basis. The municipal authority or school board admitting a child nevertheless retains its own responsibility.

Transitional stages between special schools and ordinary schools

At the moment a choice can be made between an ordinary school and a special school. Apart from the fact that there is little contact between the two, as already observed, they differ greatly in the principles on which they work and the methods they use. This situation could be improved by making more arrangements in both branches for transitional facilities, thus creating a more flexible system for children with problems. Possible arrangements include:

- extra help from specialists in ordinary schools for part of the week, later to be replaced by extra help from the teachers in the school.

- extra help for a maximum of say, six months outside the child's own class in the ordinary school.
- provisions in special schools for those children who are only likely to be there for a relatively short period.
- provisions which allow for the gradual adjustment of children from special schools to an ordinary school environment.

Experiments will have to be conducted to find out what can be achieved with various kinds of help for children with problems in ordinary schools. The same experiments will also have to indicate what is the best way of organising transitional arrangements in ordinary schools and the length of time that a child can be separated from his fellow classmates to receive extra help in an ordinary school without becoming isolated from the rest. If there were a risk of this happening, the child would be better off temporarily attending a special school.

A plan of action is needed to develop and renew the education of children with problems, with the aim of collecting information on problem areas in the current education of such children, so that well-founded decisions can be taken at a later stage.

Parents

Parents have prime responsibility for the upbringing of their children and they play an important role in their guidance. Parents will have more idea of how children can best be helped in their development if there is good contact between them and the school through discussion groups, or sometimes actual help.

Experiments

Changes in special education cannot be introduced until experiments have provided adequate information on the direction to be taken. Experiments will have to be conducted in special education and in ordinary education to see how children with problems can be catered for in the ordinary schools. The new Primary Education Bill allows for this possibility but the practical aspects have yet to be investigated by means of experiments. Meanwhile, improvements can be made, in the short term, in the field of guidance, for example, without the existing special education system being affected.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Besluit buitengewoon onderwijs 1967

(Special Education Decree) (No 55 in the Education and Science Acts and Administrative Orders series)

Special Education Memorandum

Short term policy and long term questions

Special Education Facilities Report

Recommendations concerning the financing of special education

The publications may be ordered from bookshops or direct from the Government Printing Office, Christoffel Plantijnstraat 1, The Hague. Tel. (070)-81 45 11

ADDRESSES

Additional information about special education may be obtained from:
Hoofdinspectie buitengewoon onderwijs, (Special Education Inspectorate),
Onderwijscentrum Zeist, Laan van Vollenhove 3227, Zeist.

The following organizations cater for the interests of the handicapped.
Philadelphia, landelijk prot.-chr. vereniging van ouders en vrienden van het afwijkende kind, (National Protestant association for the parents and friends of handicapped children)
Dillenburgstraat 33, Utrecht.

Bond ter bevordering van de belangen van spastici, B.O.S.K., (For spastics), Anna Paulownastraat 52, 's-Gravenhage.

Nederlandsche vereniging van spierdystrofie, (For victims of muscular dystrophy), Leusderweg 178, Amersfoort

Nederlandsche vereniging van revalidatie (For rehabilitation), Eisenhowerlaan 142, 's-Gravenhage.

VeBOSS, Vereniging tot Bevordering van het Onderwijs aan Slechthorende en Spraakgebrekkige Kinderen in Nederland (For the promotion of education for partially hearing children and those with speech defects)
secr.: Langstraat 103, Gendt (Gld.)

Vereniging van Ouders van Geestelijk Gehandicapten, (For the parents of the mentally handicapped), Timmermanslaan 2, Maarssen

Landelijke Vereniging van Ouders van kinderen met leer- en opvoedingsmoeilijkheden 'De Pijler', (For parents of maladjusted children), Mevrouw M.A.van Panthaleon van Eck-Kooremans, Ansbalduslaan 50, Waalre

De Nederlandse Stichting voor het dove en slechthorende kind (For deaf and partially hearing children), Oranje-Nassaulaan 49, Amsterdam

Vereniging het Nederlandse Blindenwezen, (For the blind), Vondelstraat 128, Amsterdam

Vereniging tot Bestrijding van de Epilepsie, (For epileptics), Achterweg 5, Heemstede

Landelijke Stichting ter Behartiging van de Belangen van autistische Kinderen en hun Ouders, (For autistic children and their parents), Secretariaat: Kemphaanstraat 5, Velp, Mevrouw M. de Boer-Legro. Contact-address: M. Hildebrand, De Steenkampen 90, Voorthuizen

Gehandicapten Organisatie Nederland, (For the handicapped), Leenderweg 188, Eindhoven

Algemene Nederlandse Invalidenbond, (For the disabled), Verspronckweg 243, Haarlem

Vereniging van ouderorganisaties verbonden aan scholen en centra voor lichamelijk gehandicapten, V.O.L.G., (Association of parent-teacher organisations - physically handicapped children), secr.: Koepellaan 8, Scherpenzeel, Utrecht.

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